

To whom it may concern,

February 27, 2013

I am in support of house bill 6454, An act concerning fire station work zones.

I am the Chief of the Town of Windsor Volunteer Fire Department and would like to advise you of a problem that I had around 2008. My department was at a scene of a kitchen fire and after suppression was complete, an aerial piece of apparatus had to back onto Rt. 159, a state road in order to return to its station. A Lieutenant in full firefighting protective gear walked onto Rt. 159 to stop traffic so that the aerial operator could safely back onto Rt. 159. The Lieutenant held up his hands and stopped an on coming passenger van and then motioned to the aerial operator to back onto Rt. 159. When the Lieutenant did this the van's operator decided to start up and swerve around the Lieutenant in an attempt to "beat" the aerial piece into the intersection. The van did not make it and crashed into the bucket portion of the aerial piece.

Windsor Police began an investigation and determined that firefighters cannot direct traffic unless they are fire/police officers. My aerial operator received an oral warning for unsafe backing and was told that he caused the accident. Although I find this absurd and believe several existing laws give firefighters the right to direct traffic at emergency scenes, I feel that the Attorney General should make that call.

This is the reason why House Bill 6454 should be passed as it will alleviate some confusion to firefighters directing traffic and will only increase the safety of all firefighters.

Thank you.

Respectfully,

Chief William Lewis  
Town of Windsor Volunteer Fire Department  
275 Broad Street  
Windsor, CT